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SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [EUN](#) [HR](#) [SI](#)  
SUBJECT: SLOVENIA: "SUBSTANTIVE AMENDMENTS" NEEDED TO  
ACCEPT REHN PROPOSAL

Classified By: CDA Brad Freden, reasons 1.4(b,d)

Summary

1. (C) Prime Minister Borut Pahor announced on May 12 that the major parties had reached agreement on a response to the latest proposal from EU Enlargement Commissioner Olli Rehn on resolving the Slovenia-Croatia border dispute. Pahor told press that the response would include "substantive amendments," without which Slovenia could not accept the Rehn initiative. A public opinion poll shows support for the current Rehn proposal only in the low single digits. Pahor has held the line on protecting Slovenia's "national interests" from prior EU pressure, however, and the utter lack of public support for the proposal provides him political incentive to hold steady once again and insist on changes to Rehn's proposal. We believe at least one more round of closed-door negotiations will be necessary to reach an agreement that is acceptable to both sides. Absent an agreement, PM Pahor feels his government could collapse if he allowed Croatia's accession talks to go forward. End Summary.

Coalition and Jansa in Step, For Now

2. (U) After several rounds of meetings with all parliamentary parties, PM Pahor announced on May 12 that Slovenia would submit amendments to Rehn on or shortly after May 15. The government has not yet detailed these amendments; the government and then the parliamentary foreign policy committee will discuss the amendments on May 14 and 15 before a final response goes to Rehn. Jansa's SDS party backed the government's position, though SNS and SLS, the two smaller opposition parties that have been the most strident on the border issue, refused to support it.

3. (C/NF) The Czech Ambassador told us that the Czechs were losing hope of finding a solution during their EU presidency, but suggested there was a small window of opportunity after EU elections (June 7) and before the intergovernmental conference (June 26). She doubted that there would be a strong wave of pressure from the EU on Slovenia because of Slovenia's response, mentioning rising EU fatigue with the issue. The MFA's Acting European Correspondent noted to us that at the April GAERC, several member states expressed solidarity with Slovenia and agreed that the border dispute was not the only -- or even the main -- obstacle to Croatia's accession negotiations. They cited Croatia's cooperation with ICTY, Croatia's subsidized ship-building industry, and the perception of widespread corruption.

Comment

4. (C) Jansa finds himself in a strong position to dictate much of Slovenia's response, as Pahor needs Jansa's support to get anything through parliament with a 2/3 majority (necessary for Croatia's accession). If Pahor caved to EU pressure, the coalition could very well collapse with Jansa

waiting in the wings to take over. Though Jansa has used the consultation process to position himself well in case Pahor backs down from his public insistence on amendments to the Rehn proposal, there is no incentive at this stage for Pahor to do so. There is little public support for the current Rehn proposal and Pahor has already stated that, if this one does not work out, "another proposal will come along." We see Pahor's rhetoric not as bluster, but political calculation attuned to his coalition's survival.

15. (C) At this point it seems clear that the only way forward is another round of serious, closed-door negotiations among Croatia, Slovenia and Rehn. No Slovene government could survive acceptance of the proposal in its current form or allow Croatia's accession talks to resume absent an agreed way forward.

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